

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method for obtaining, during the manufacture of a dairy product selected from the group comprising cheeses and fermented dairy products, an acidification kinetic which is substantially independent of the content of the milk in terms of its constituents, in which there is incorporated with the milk at least one strain of ~~Sterptococcus~~ Streptococcus thermophilus which is at least partially incapable of hydrolyzing urea.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, in which the acidification kinetic is substantially independent of the urea content of the milk.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, in which the acidification kinetic of the milk is substantially independent of the nickel or cobalt content of the milk.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, in which the acidification kinetic of the milk does not exhibit any temporary slowing down.

14. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 10, in which there is incorporated with the milk at least one mutant strain of *Streptococcus thermophilus* which is at least partially incapable of hydrolyzing urea, at a seeding rate lower than the seeding rate used for the parent strain of *Streptococcus thermophilus* capable of hydrolyzing urea.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 10, in which the *Streptococcus thermophilus* strain is the strain 298-K ~~registered~~ registered at the CNCM under number I-2311.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, in which the *Streptococcus thermophilus* strain is the strain 298-10 registered at the CNCM under the number I-2312.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of selecting *Streptococcus thermophilus* strains useful during the manufacture of a dairy product selected from the group comprising cheeses and fermented dairy products, comprising:

- comparing the acidification kinetic of the milk in the presence of a mutant strain of *Streptococcus thermophilus* to be tested, which is at least partially, preferably totally, incapable of hydrolyzing urea, making it possible to obtain an acidification kinetic which is substantially independent of the content of the milk in terms of its constituents,

- with the acidification kinetic of the milk in the presence of a parent strain of the mutant strain; and

- selecting the mutant strains of *Streptococcus thermophilus* capable of acidifying a milk according to acidification kinetics which are variable compared with the acidification kinetics of the parent strains.